

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 967

By Coley

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Judge Kenneth A. Turner of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Judge Kenneth A. Turner; and

WHEREAS, Judge Turner was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished professional career, Judge Kenneth Turner served with acumen and alacrity and uniformly earned the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong resident of Memphis, Judge Kenneth Turner twice served with the United States Marine Corps, risking his personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom; he likewise imperiled himself on behalf of his community during his thirteen years as a police officer, attaining the rank of Captain; and

WHEREAS, Judge Turner earned a law degree from the University of Memphis, an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Christian Brothers University, and an honorary degree in the Administration of Justice from Wichita State University; and

WHEREAS, a stalwart advocate of the protection and improvement of life for youth, Judge Turner served as the first Executive Director of the Memphis and Shelby County Youth Guidance Commission; and

WHEREAS, in November of 1963, Judge Kenneth Turner first won election as Juvenile Court Judge of Memphis and Shelby County and was continuously re-elected in every subsequent election; and

WHEREAS, during the forty-two years that Judge Turner admirably served as a Juvenile Court Judge, he was integral in shaping the current juvenile justice process. He abolished the

institutional emergency shelter of dependent and neglected children in favor of a plan that immediately places children in suitable family homes; originated the use of summonses of youth by law enforcement agencies in place of physical arrests; and created the nation's first juvenile voluntary probation service, the Auxiliary Probation Service of the Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County, in 1964; and

WHEREAS, strictly enforcing child support and paternity laws throughout his career, Judge Kenneth Turner emphasized the importance of legitimization of children born out-of-wedlock; from 1965 to 2005, the Court legitimated more than 150,000 children and collected \$1.1 billion in child support payments; and

WHEREAS, Judge Turner also actively advanced the interests of children and youth through the legislative process, as he wrote and sponsored legislation to revise and update Tennessee's child labor laws, authored laws pertaining to paternity and child support, and championed laws to prevent child abuse and neglect ; and

WHEREAS, an active legal scholar, Judge Kenneth Turner wrote the first comprehensive work on juvenile court problems and procedures, *Juvenile Justice*; he is also the author of numerous articles that address child support enforcement, the prevention and treatment of crime and delinquency, and mental health services for delinquent juveniles; and

WHEREAS, a pioneer in many respects, Judge Turner led the privatization of services to children; developed youth employment programs in Shelby County, including the first Youth Conservation Corps in 1962; and contributed to the establishment of Tennessee's child protective services; and

WHEREAS, Judge Kenneth Turner was a member of many professional and community organizations; he served as President of the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and was a charter member of the Economic Club of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Judge Turner's laudable record of commitment to children and youth earned him numerous awards and much recognition. He received, for instance, a Distinguished Service Award in 1998 from the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and a State Recognition Award in 1988 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Juvenile Court Services Association honored Judge Turner in 2001 by creating the Judge Kenneth A. Turner Scholarship in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Memphis to encourage students to pursue careers in juvenile justice; and

WHEREAS, Judge Kenneth Turner was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his loving wife, Mary Sue Ballard Turner, his daughter, Dr. Joy Maness, and his son-in-law, Jerry Maness; and; and

WHEREAS, Judge Turner leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Judge Kenneth A. Turner, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Judge Turner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.